

GEORGIA DEBATE UNION

Press Release
September 11, 2009

Georgia Debate Union Debuts Paperless Initiative at Season Opener

On September 18, the Georgia Debate Union will take their sustainable Paperless Debate Initiative on the road to the National Season Opening Tournament on the campus of Georgia State University. There will be more than 170 teams from 50 Colleges and Universities in Atlanta for the event.

Intercollegiate debate is a research-intensive activity designed to test the critical thinking and argument skills of University students. Traditionally, debate research has been in the form of paper documents. A two-person team would carry between four and eight large boxes filled with evidence. To put this in perspective, each pair of debaters would have more than 400 pounds of evidence. These files would be carried from tournament to tournament, consuming fuel in University vans and on commercial airline flights.

All of that is coming to an end. As part of the University of Georgia's commitment to sustainable standards and practices, the Georgia Debate Union has launched the Georgia Debate Paperless Initiative. Starting with the 2009-10 season, Georgia Debate has gone digital, becoming the first nationally competitive public University to debate using entirely electronic methods.

Evidence is now stored on computer. Primary research materials like books and magazines that were photocopied are now scanned and edited digitally. Students build their speeches, share evidence, and take notes on their laptops.

Such a big change has taken a long time to implement. The debaters and coaches have been working on their system all summer, developing electronic distribution methods for documents and growing accustomed to reading from the computer rather than paper files. The Paperless Debate Initiative will save several tons of paper per year.

Sustainable resource management will allow the Georgia Debate Union to travel more students to more tournaments, giving them the rich experience of debate to complement their academic experiences at the University of Georgia.



Edward Panetta
Director of Debate
146 Terrell Hall
542-3237
epanetta@uga.edu

Casey Harrigan
Debate Coach
Phi Kappa Hall
542-9420
harrigan@uga.edu

